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***Physicians and Patients:  
The Conversation about Type 2  
Diabetes and Weight***

the coming together of  
Henley Centre HeadlightVision  
and Yankelovich

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# Study Objectives and Methodology

Yankelovich, a part of The Futures Company, conducted a survey among physicians treating patients with type 2 diabetes in order to:

- Understand the attitudes of physicians regarding weight management for their patients with type 2 diabetes, as part of a treatment approach to the disease
- Examine the interaction between physicians and patients regarding type 2 diabetes and weight control

Survey results were obtained through phone interviews among a representative national sample of 200 physicians treating at least 5+ patients with type 2 diabetes each month. Interviews took place November 3<sup>rd</sup> through November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Additional phone interviews among a representative national sample of 700 adults with type 2 diabetes took place October 15 through 19, 2008.

- The margin of error for the physician study is  $\pm 6.9\%$  and for the patient study it is  $\pm 3.7\%$



# *The conversation about type 2 diabetes and weight is perceived differently by physicians and patients with type 2 diabetes*

Physicians say they are talking about weight a lot, yet many patients with type 2 diabetes do not report hearing their message.

- Eight in ten physicians say they discuss weight issues with their patients every/almost every visit, yet only four in ten patients with type 2 diabetes acknowledge this frequency of weight discussion.
- Almost all physicians (90%) also claim that they tell overweight patients to lose weight, but only 66% of patients with type 2 diabetes say their doctor has suggested it.

Physicians say they suggest a lot more weight loss strategies than patients with type 2 diabetes report.

- Most physicians say they follow-up about weight loss, suggest eliminating or adding certain foods to a diet, and recommend specific diet and exercise programs, yet few patients with type 2 diabetes report that their doctor has made such recommendations.

Patients with type 2 diabetes also may not be getting the message that medications cause weight gain

- Over half of physicians believe their patients with type 2 diabetes understand the link between weight and medication, but only 34% of patients with type 2 diabetes say that their physician has warned them that some diabetes medications can cause weight gain.

## *Physicians face a number of frustrations in helping their patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight*

Many physicians feel frustration at not being able to help their patients lose weight.

- Only 7% of physicians agree they've had success helping patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight, and most (54%) feel frustrated that they can't do more.
- Physicians see patients' with type 2 diabetes reluctance to change lifestyle as the biggest barrier to achieving the level of care they would like for them.
- Physicians also recognize that it takes more than will power for their patients with type 2 diabetes to lose weight successfully.
- To compound the difficulties patients with type 2 diabetes have in making lifestyle changes, physicians see the lack of support for education services and prevention by the healthcare system as another major barrier to successful treatment of type 2 diabetes.

Many physicians report that patients with type 2 diabetes resist taking their medications and don't always follow their instructions.

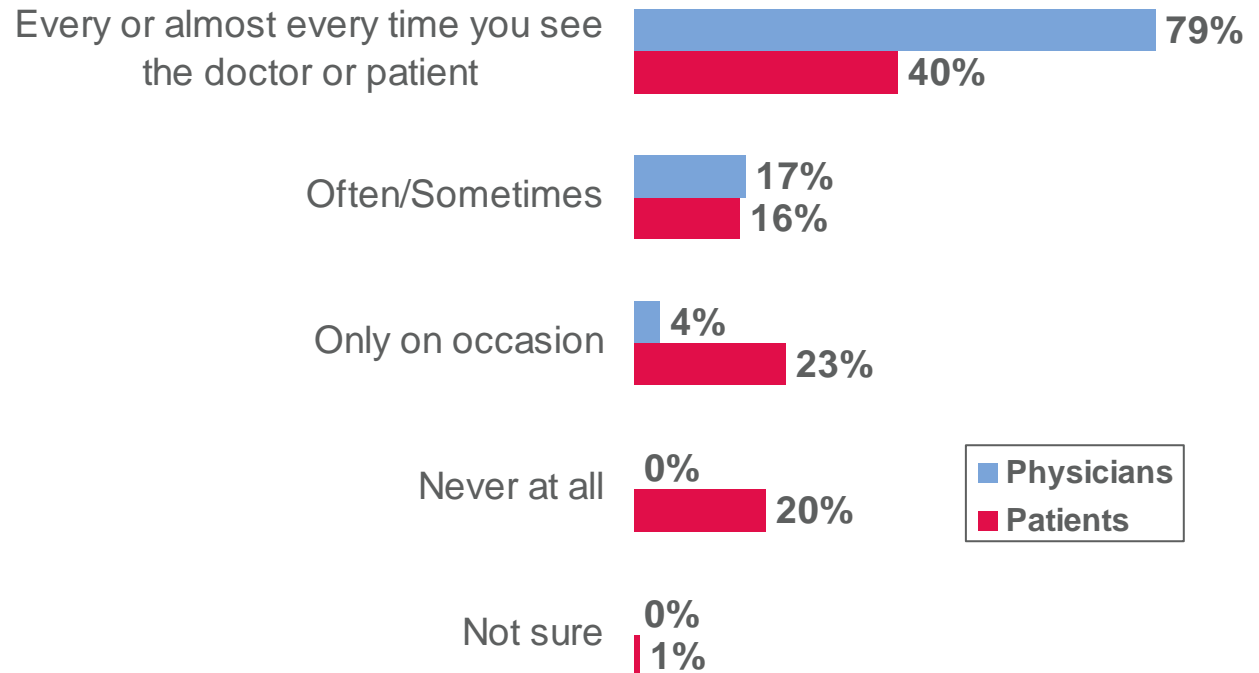
- Physicians report that a majority of their patients with type 2 diabetes resist taking medications.
  - The most common reasons cited for resisting medication are concern about side effects and cost.
- Other than coming in for office visits and taking prescribed medications, physicians believe less than half of their patients with type 2 diabetes follow their recommendations regarding weight and disease management.

*The conversation about type 2 diabetes and weight is perceived differently by physicians and patients with type 2 diabetes*

# Physicians feel they are talking about weight more frequently than patients with type 2 diabetes report

- Over three quarters of physicians say they discuss weight issues with their patients with type 2 diabetes every/almost every time they see them, but only four in ten patients with type 2 diabetes say this occurs with their doctor.

## How frequently do you discuss weight issues with your doctor/overweight type 2 diabetes patients?

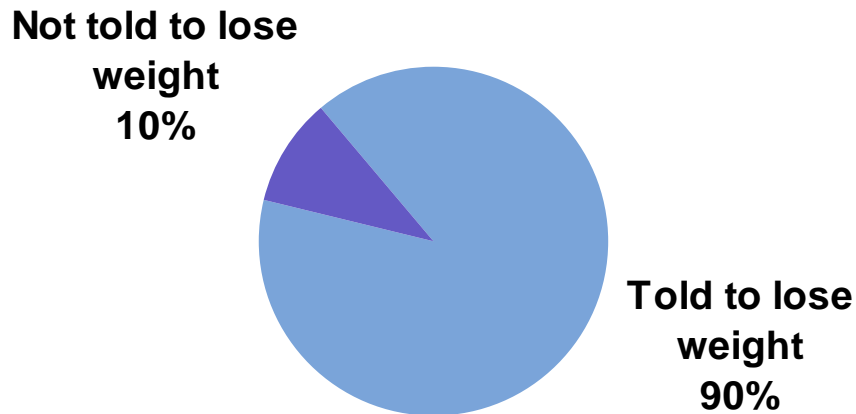


# Physicians say they tell their overweight patients to lose weight more than patients with type 2 diabetes report being told

- Nine in ten physicians report telling their overweight patients with type 2 diabetes to lose weight, but 66% of patients with type 2 diabetes say their physician has told them to lose weight.

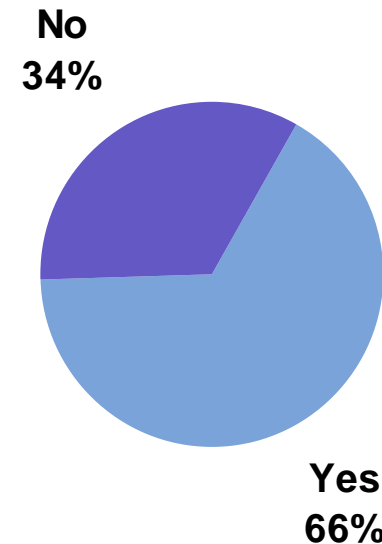
What percentage of your overweight type 2 diabetes patients do you specifically tell that they need to lose weight?

Reported by Physicians



Has your doctor ever suggested that you lose weight?

Reported by Patients\*



\*Asked among total patients (N=703) where 72% are overweight/obese (based on BMI)

# Physicians underestimate the number of patients with type 2 diabetes that are obese

What percentage of type 2 diabetes patients are overweight or obese according to BMI?

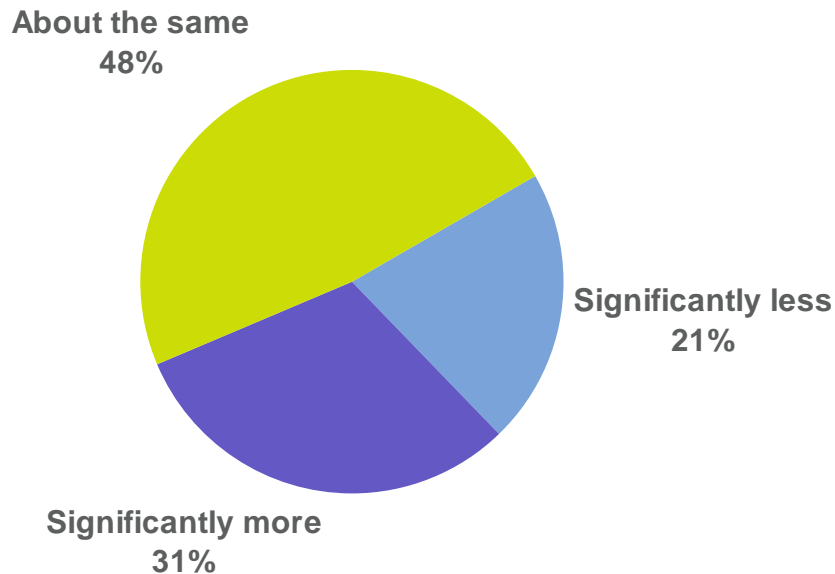
	Reported by Physicians (N=200)	Reported by Patients (calculated from patient reported height and weight) (N=703)
Underweight	-	0%
Normal	-	11%
<b>Overweight/Obese (Net)</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Overweight	31%	25%
Obese	44%	59%
Don't know/Refused	-	5%

# Yet patients with type 2 diabetes are more likely to report weight loss than physicians perceive

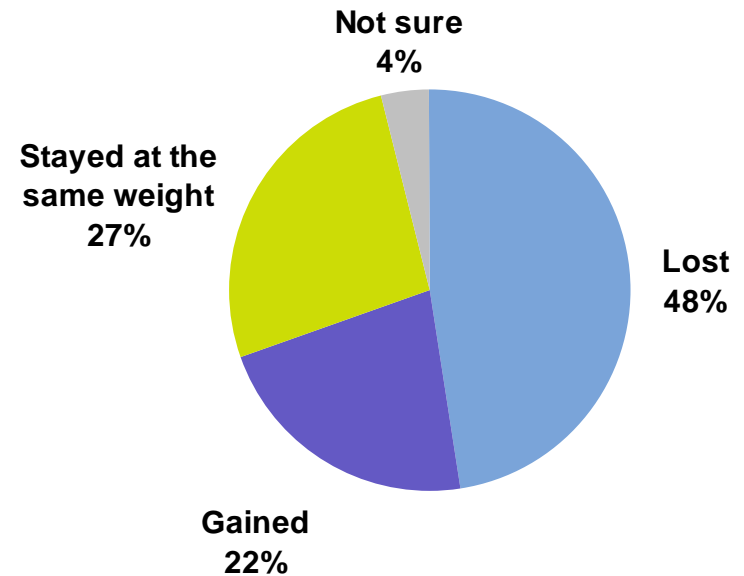
- Almost half of patients with type 2 diabetes claim to have lost weight since diagnosis, but their physicians do not report significant weight loss

Since diagnosis do type 2 diabetes patients currently weight more/less/the same?

Reported by Physicians

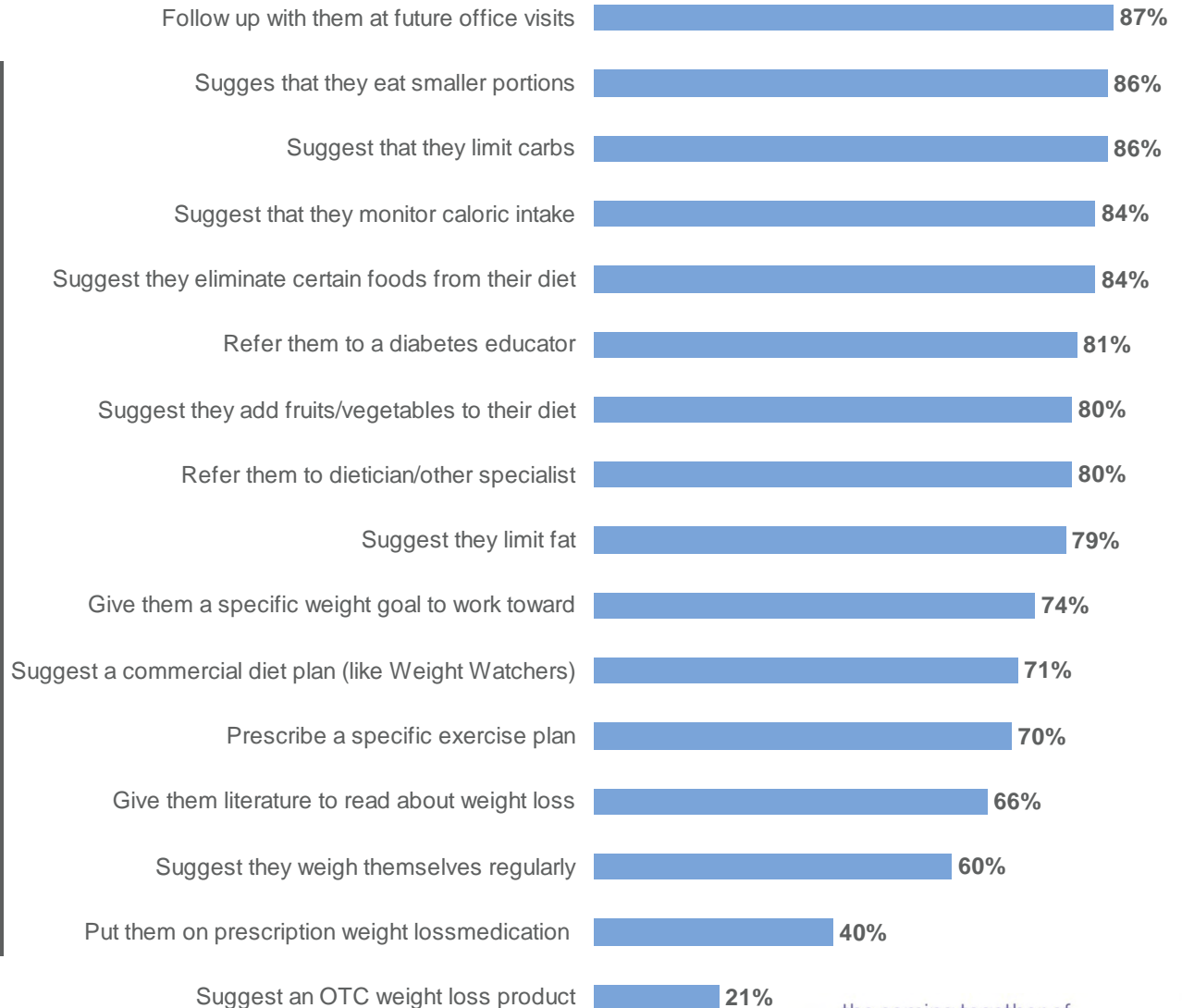


Reported by Patients



# Physicians say they recommend a number of weight loss strategies to their patients with type 2 diabetes

Which of the following do you typically do to help your overweight type 2 diabetes patients lose weight?



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## Yet fewer patients with type 2 diabetes report getting such advice

- Most notably, physicians claim to recommend adding fruits/vegetables (or certain foods) to a patient's diet, or suggest commercial diet plans (like Weight Watchers), but few patients with type 2 diabetes say their physician has recommended this to them.

What is typically recommended to help overweight Type 2 Diabetes patients lose weight?	Physicians	Patients	Perception Gap
Follow up with future office visits	87%	68%	19%
Eliminate certain foods from diet	84%	64%	20%
Meet with Diabetes educator	81%	55%	26%
Add fruits/vegetables (or certain foods) to diet	80%	29%	51%
Meet with dietician/other specialist	80%	57%	23%
Commercial diet plan (like Weight Watchers)	71%	16%	55%
Specific exercise plan	70%	27%	43%
Read literature about weight loss	66%	51%	15%
Prescription medications	40%	9%	31%
OTC weight loss products	21%	5%	16%

\*Among patients whose physician recommended weight loss (N=463)

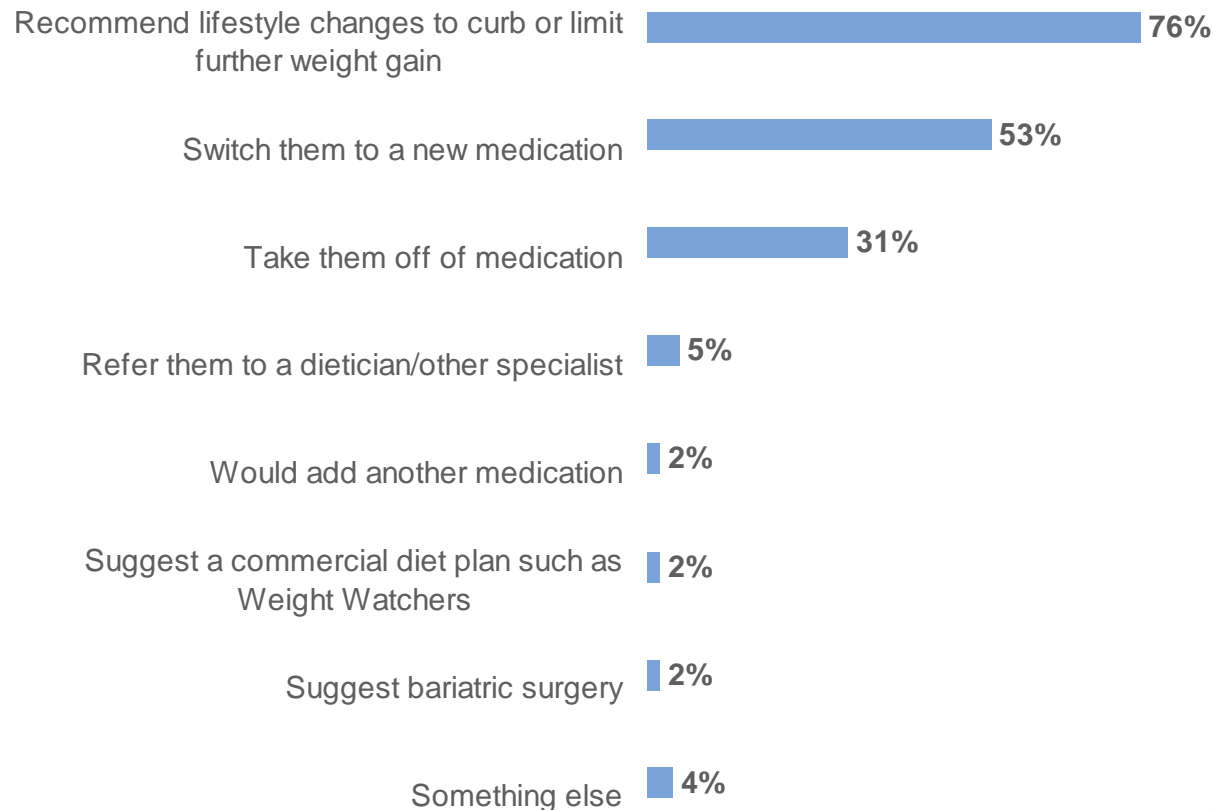
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# Physicians are most likely to recommend lifestyle changes or switch diabetes medications to limit future weight gain in patients with type 2 diabetes

- Few would add additional medications, suggest diet plans or surgery.

What do you typically do if your overweight type 2 diabetes patients begin to gain significant weight after starting a new ORAL medication?



## *Patients with type 2 diabetes may not be getting the message that medications cause weight gain, as well as doctors think*

- Physicians say that 52% of their patients with type 2 diabetes understand that diabetes medications cause weight gain, but only 34% of patients with type 2 diabetes report being warned by their physician that some diabetes medications can cause weight gain.

### Physicians

What percent of your type 2 diabetes patients do you think understand that some diabetes medications may contribute to weight gain?

**52%**

### Patients

Which of the following has the physician who currently treats you for diabetes ever done?

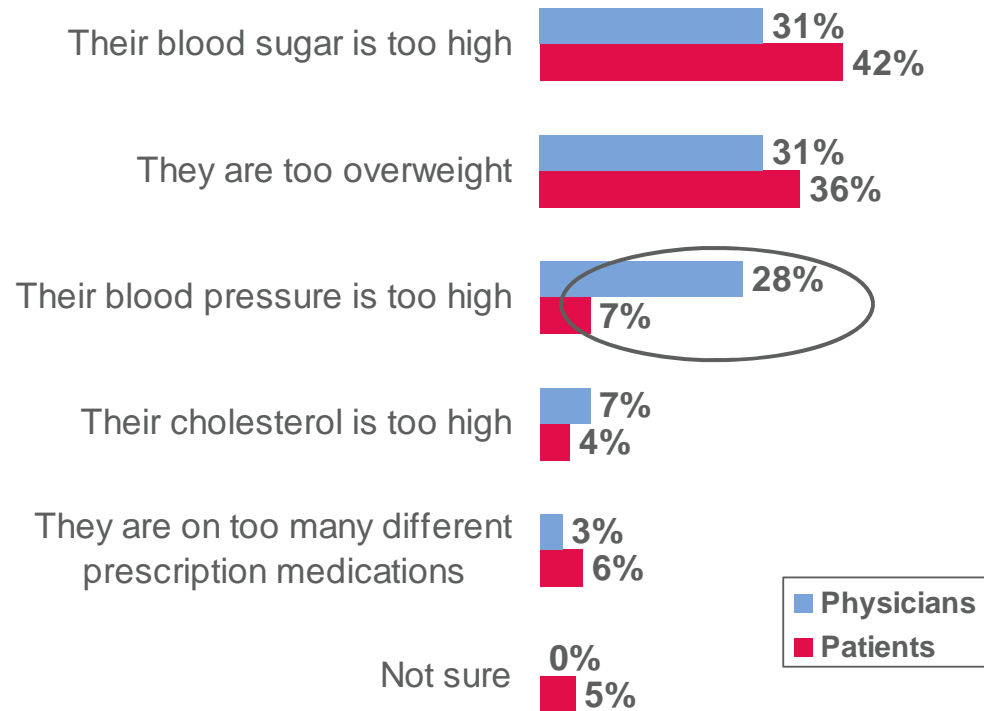
Warned you that taking some diabetes medications can cause you to gain weight

**34%**

## Patients with type 2 diabetes underestimate high blood pressure as a health risk

- Physicians and patients with type 2 diabetes agree that high blood sugar levels and being overweight have a negative impact on the health of a person with type 2 diabetes.
- Yet patients underestimate the risk of high blood pressure, as only 7% consider blood pressure as the most negative health impact (compared to 28% of physicians).

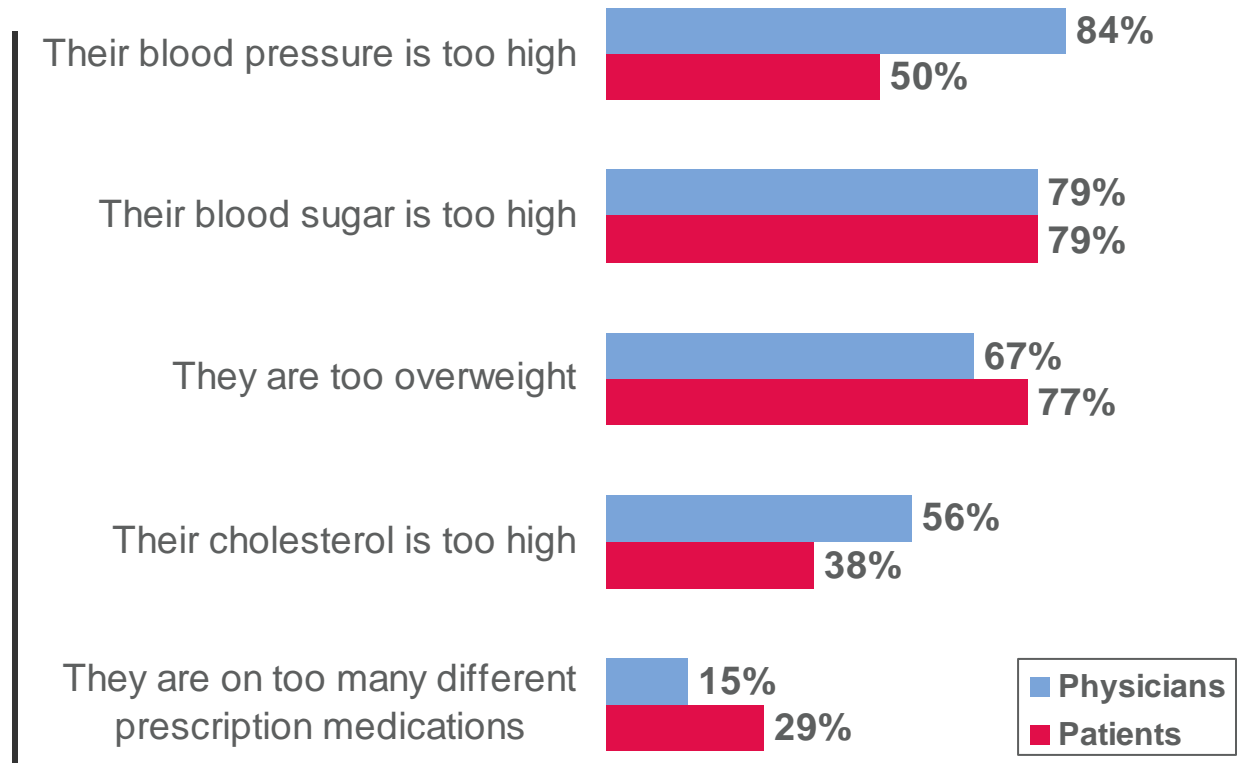
Which do you think would have the **most negative** impact on the health of a person with type 2 diabetes?



# Most physicians say high blood pressure is one of the top health risks for patients with type 2 diabetes

- Eighty-four percent of physicians list high blood pressure as one of the top three most negative impacts on health, while only half of patients with type 2 diabetes acknowledge it's severity.

Percent selecting as one of the **top three** most negative impacts on health:

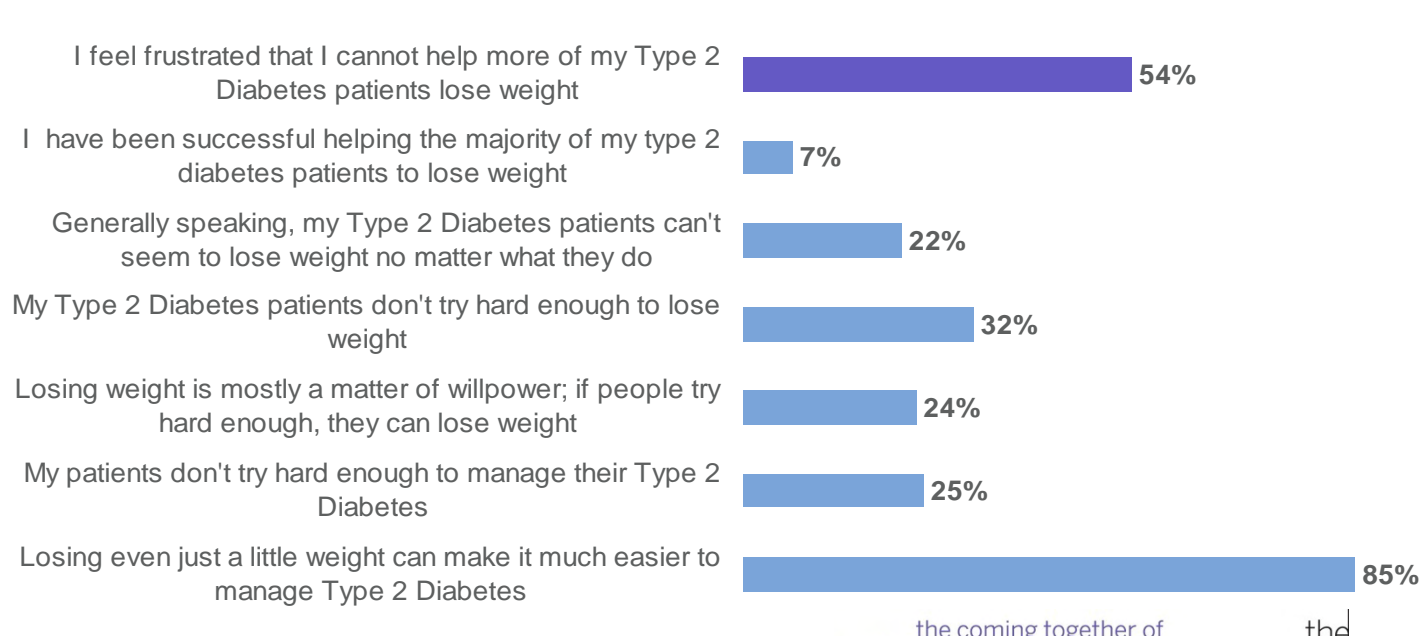


# *Barriers to better treatment of patients with type 2 diabetes*

## Many physicians feel frustration about not being able to help patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight

- Over half (54%) of physicians feel frustrated that they cannot help more of their patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight and only 7% of physicians agree they have had success helping patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight.
- About one-third of physicians feel that their patients with type 2 diabetes don't try hard enough to lose weight, but few (24%) agree that losing weight is simply a matter of will power.
- Yet almost all physicians (85%) acknowledge that losing even a little weight can help manage type 2 diabetes

### Weight loss and diabetes: Percent of physicians who strongly agree



## Yet patients with type 2 diabetes do not hold physicians responsible for helping them to lose weight

- 54% of physicians feel frustrated that they cannot help their patients with type 2 diabetes lose weight, but only 11% of patients with type 2 diabetes agree that their physician does not do enough to help them lose weight.

**% of physicians who Strongly Agree:**

**I feel frustrated that I cannot help more of my type 2 diabetes patients lose weight**

**54%**

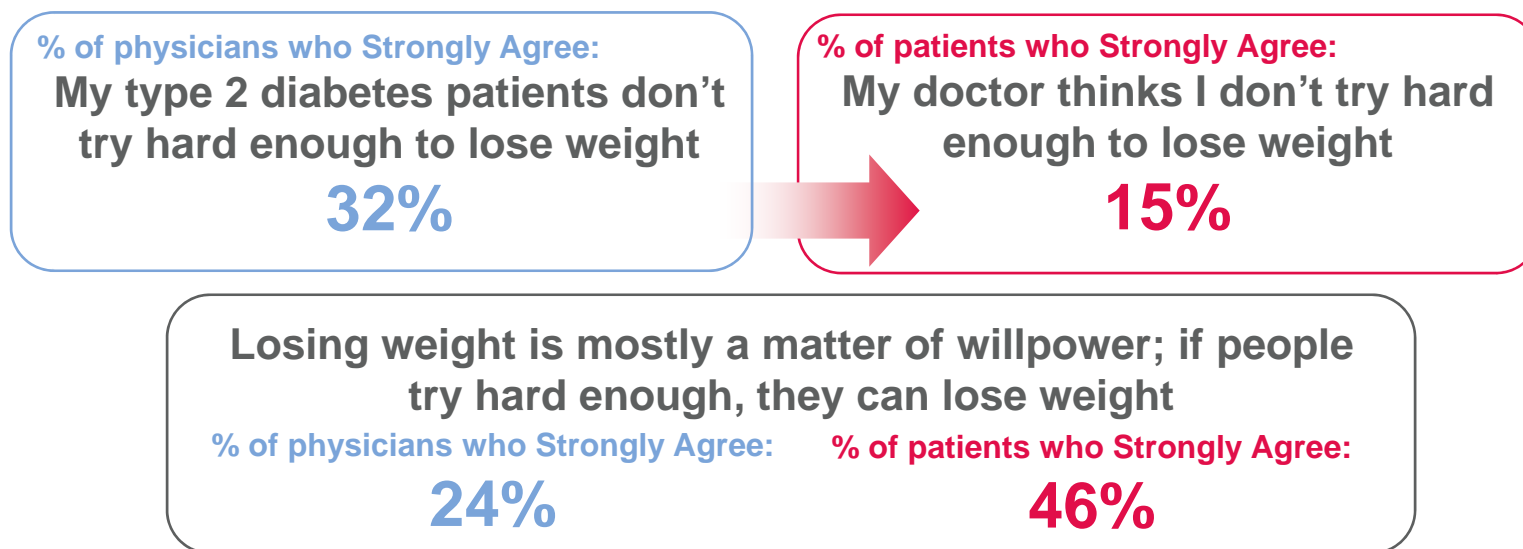
**% of patients who Strongly Agree:**

**My physician does not do enough to help me lose weight**

**11%**

## Physicians recognize that it takes more than will power to lose weight successfully

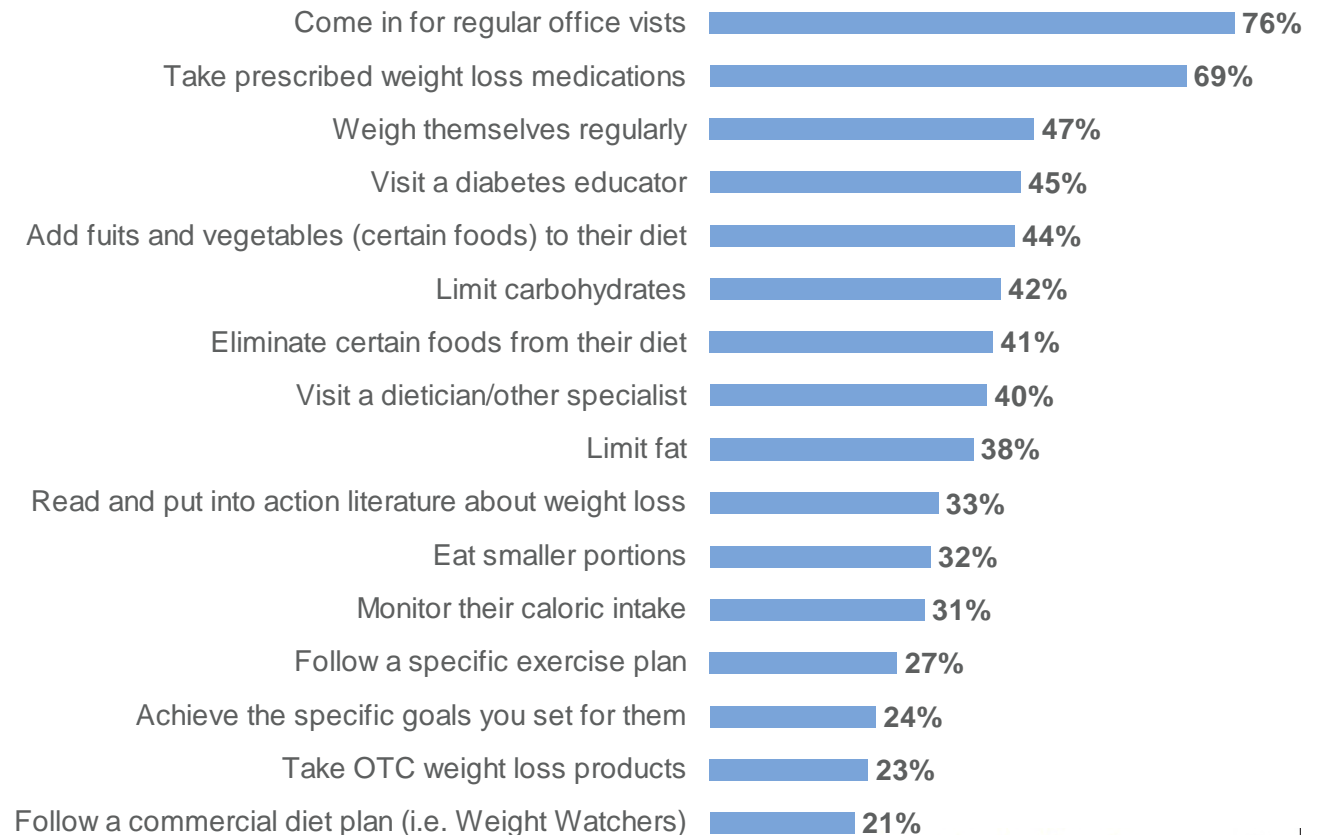
- While some physicians say that their patients with type 2 diabetes don't try hard enough to lose weight, they also recognize that will power alone is not enough.
  - Only one-quarter of physicians strongly agree that if people try hard enough they can lose weight, compared to 46% of patients with type 2 diabetes.



# Physicians are not optimistic that patients with type 2 diabetes adhere to their recommendations to lose weight

- Other than coming in for regular office visits and taking prescribed weight loss medications, physicians believe less than half of their patients with type 2 diabetes adhere to their recommendations regarding weight loss.

**How many of your overweight type 2 diabetes patients adhere regularly to these weight loss recommendations?**



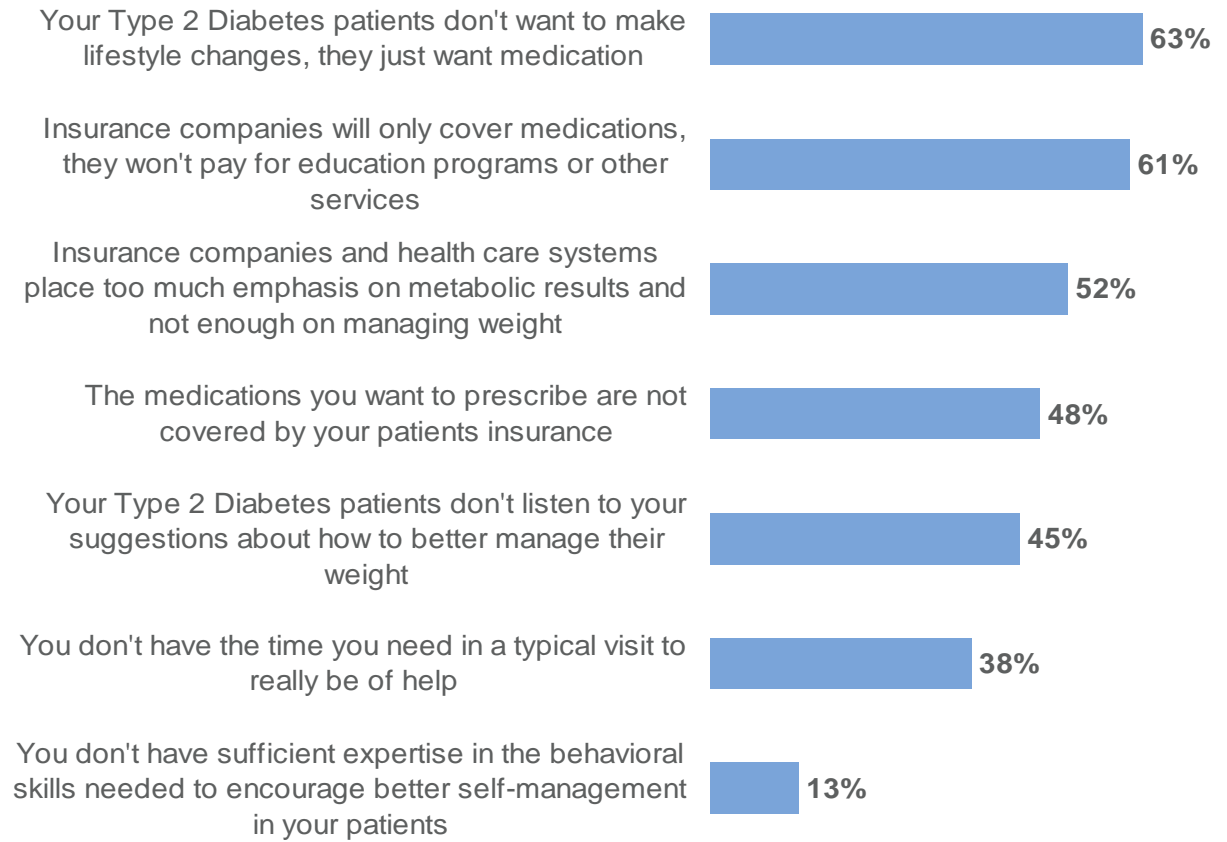
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# A lack of support for patients with type 2 diabetes in lifestyle changes is a major barrier to better healthcare

- Physicians see the health care industry's focus on treating metabolic conditions rather than prevention as an important barrier to treating their type 2 diabetes patients.

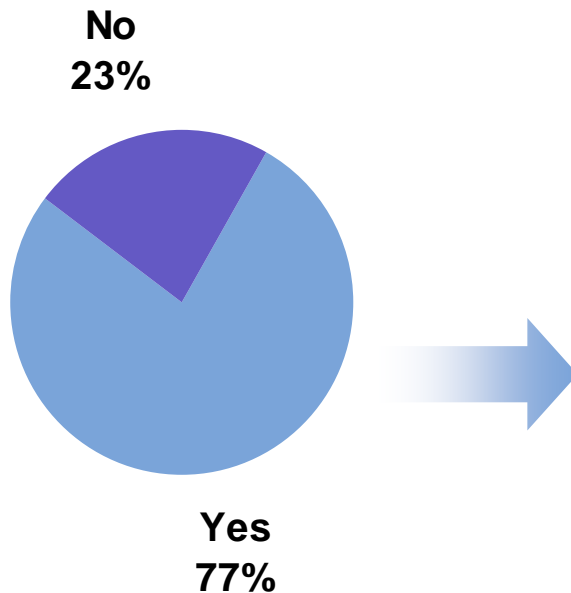
**How much of a barrier are each of the following things to helping you achieve the level of care you would like for your type 2 diabetes patients?**



# Physicians report that most of their patients with type 3 diabetes resist taking suggested medications

- Physicians say this resistance is due to concern for side effects, cost concerns, fear of infections, denial of having the disease and wariness for taking medications in general, among others.

Do any of your patients resist taking medications you suggest?



Why don't they want to take these medications?

(Open-ended Responses)

- Concern about potential side effects (i.e. weight gain) (56%)
- Cost concerns (55%)
- Not wanting to take medications in general (22%)
- Fear of injections (18%)
- Overall denial of disease (14%)
- Desire to manage their condition themselves (7%)

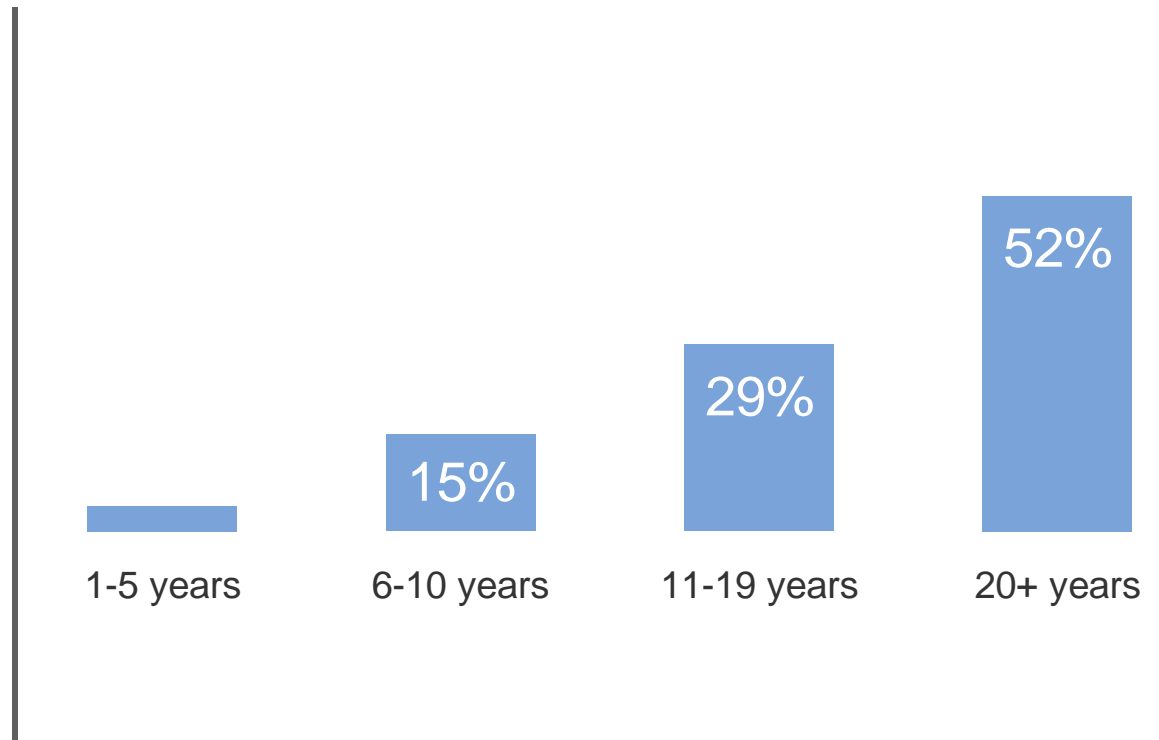


# Sample Characteristics

	Physicians (N=200)	Patients (N=703)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	79%	44%
Female	21%	56%
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	1%	1%
35-49	39%	9%
50-64	54%	45%
65+	5%	44%
<i>Refused</i>	1%	1%
<b>A1C number</b>		
Under 7.0%	49%	34%
7+	-	31%
<i>Not sure</i>	-	32%
<i>Refused</i>	-	3%

## Many of the surveyed physicians are experienced

For how many years have you been in practice?



# Physicians treat an average of 130 patients with Type 2 Diabetes each month

In a typical month, about how many patients do you treat for Type 2 Diabetes?

